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Celebrate the Century™

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1950s CELEBRATE THE CENTURY™

HISTORICAL EVENTS
SPORTS
ART

POLITICAL FIGURES
LIFESTYLE



Family Fun, Suburbia, and Nuclear Threats

The 1950s were, for the most part, years of peace and prosperity. Millions of families moved to the suburbs. Americans liked Dwight D. Eisenhower, their kindly war-hero President.

Television became popular; *I Love Lucy* and *Guns n' Roses* were hits. Teenagers chose their own fashions and music. Elvis Presley thrilled young people and shocked their elders.

The decade also had a serious side. The Korean War took more than 50,000 American lives. The first hydrogen bomb was detonated. In 1954 the U.S. Supreme Court declared racial segregation in public schools unconstitutional, and in 1955, in Montgomery, Alabama, Rosa Parks refused to give up her bus seat to a white man. But in 1957 President Eisenhower had to use the Arkansas National Guard and paratroopers to enforce integration at a Little Rock high school.

In January 1959, Alaska was admitted as the 49th state, and in August Hawaii became the 50th state.

New words: brainwashing, ballpoint, high-rise, centerfold



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Celebrate The Century™ is an exciting, limited-edition stamp series that commemorates the most significant people, events and accomplishments of the 20th century.

Collect them for yourself or give them as a gift. These unforgettable stamps are a once-in-a-lifetime chance to Celebrate The Century and Put Your Stamp on History.™

The Korean War (1950-1953), the first major United Nations military action, claimed the lives of more than 50,000 Americans. U.S. and other UN forces fought to oppose the invasion of South Korea by Communist troops.
CELEBRATE THE CENTURY - 1950s

The first successful U.S. Earth satellite, **Explorer 1**, was launched January 31, 1958. The second, **Vanguard 1**, was launched March 17, 1958. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) was formally established October 1, 1958.
CELEBRATE THE CENTURY - 1950s

The **1951 National League pennant race** was decided in a best-of-three games playoff. The New York **Giants**™ beat the Brooklyn **Dodgers**™ when, in the ninth inning of the third game, Bobby Thomson hit a three-run homer.
CELEBRATE THE CENTURY - 1950s

Teenagers defined their own **'50s fashion** look. Girls chose skirts and sweaters, bobby socks and saddle shoes, or, for leisure, blue jeans. Boys liked white T-shirts, V-necked sweaters, jeans, and loafers, white bucks, or black boots.
CELEBRATE THE CENTURY - 1950s

Polio epidemics peaked in the '50s, with almost 58,000 new cases in 1952 alone. A vaccine developed by Dr. Jonas Salk, and federally approved in April 1955, helped control the spread of the disease when it was administered nationwide.
CELEBRATE THE CENTURY - 1950s

"The Cat in the Hat" (1957) was written and illustrated by Dr. Seuss (Theodor Seuss Geisel). This masterpiece uses repeated syllables, rhythmic verse, and fanciful drawings to teach children to read and to use their imaginations.
CELEBRATE THE CENTURY - 1950s

Cars of the '50s were large and ornate. Automakers attracted buyers with annual styling changes. Tail fins, dazzling grilles, chrome trim, and hardtop convertibles were popular, as were big V-8 engines and three-toned paint jobs.
CELEBRATE THE CENTURY - 1950s

With **Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas** (1954), the U.S. Supreme Court declared racial separation in public education unconstitutional. The ruling initiated the beginning of mandatory **integration of public schools**.
CELEBRATE THE CENTURY - 1950s



Between 1949 and 1956, the New York **Yankees**™ and their crosstown rivals, the Brooklyn **Dodgers**™, met five times in the **World Series**™: 1949, 1952, 1953, 1955, and 1956. The Dodgers won once, in 1955.
CELEBRATE THE CENTURY - 1950s

With postwar prosperity, the blossoming of suburbia, and the national love for cars and movies, **drive-in theaters** were natural attractions for new American families. Teenage couples found privacy, and sometimes watched the movie.
CELEBRATE THE CENTURY - 1950s

Responding to the growing popularity of TV, film studios began producing **3-D movies**. Wearing glasses with gray Polaroid® lenses, viewers were started by images that leapt off the screen.
CELEBRATE THE CENTURY - 1950s

Stock cars, modified versions of ordinary passenger cars, attracted drivers and fans alike. The 1950s witnessed a boom in **stock car racing**, and the first Daytona 500® was held in 1959.
CELEBRATE THE CENTURY - 1950s

With roots in rhythm and blues, country and western, and gospel, **rock 'n' roll** crossed racial lines. Some adults found the rhythms rebellious and threatening, but the lyrics and loud music appealed directly to teenagers.
CELEBRATE THE CENTURY - 1950s

"I Love Lucy" (1951-1957) was one of the most popular shows in TV history. Lucille Ball starred as a zany housewife trying to break into show business. Her real-life husband, Desi Arnaz, co-starred as her bandleader husband.
CELEBRATE THE CENTURY - 1950s

Boxer **Rocky Marciano**, the "Brockton Blockbuster," held the world heavyweight title from September 1952 to April 1956, defending his crown six times. He is the only professional heavyweight boxing champion to retire undefeated.
CELEBRATE THE CENTURY - 1950s

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BACKGROUND PHOTO:

Postwar American families embraced television. In January 1950 there were only four million TV sets in the U.S. By January 1959 there were 44 million.

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PRICE: \$4.95

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